

# Roseville Legend

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## Roseville's Progressive Pottery

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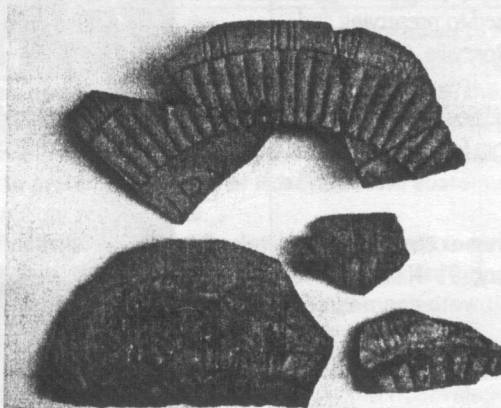
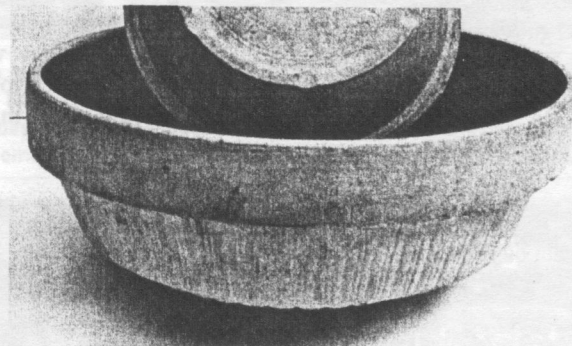
**T**he earliest reference currently available to Roseville's short-lived Progressive Pottery Co. is the 1901 Ohio State Inspector of Factories Report, which lists it as employing three men manufacturing cooking ware, east of Main Street in Roseville.

The exact location of the Progressive Pottery appears to have been just west of the South Fork of Jonathan Creek, north of Sioux Place, earlier the site of the J.L. Weaver pottery and most recently of the Cookson Pottery. Searching the gravel access road immediately behind the existing buildings reveals numerous sherds of pottery identical to pieces of Progressive Pottery ware, even including portions of the impressed marks.

The June 29, 1903, issue of *Brick and Clay Record* notes that Elmer Hyland [Ryland], of Roseville, has sold his Progressive Pottery Co. to James Miller, Charles Golden [1857-1918], and James Armstrong. Valuable additions were to be made by the new owners. The company was reorganized (December 29, 1903 *Brick and Clay Record*), D.J. Golden and Joseph Armstrong having sold their holdings to F.M. Rider [Francis M. Rider 1862-1943] and Dr. G. W. W. Walker [1828-1913]. "The new company will push the business." (The inconsistency in first names of Golden and Armstrong in these two notices is a common problem in early trade journals.)

Some excitement and a tragedy occurred when, on the second attempt to fire up the boilers in the plant, the boilers turned red hot and were ruined. Although there was no explosion, Alva Rider [1854-1904], a farmer, fell dead (*Brick and Clay Record*, January 16, 1904).

Finally, a short time later, the Progressive Pottery was incorporated with \$10,000 capital stock



Top, a Progressive Pottery stoneware bowl (see the mark on Page 3); middle, a very rare beanpot; and bottom, sherds from Jim's recent dig at the pottery's site. The Progressive Pottery Company was located on the site of the former Cookson pottery. [Photos courtesy of James L. Murphy.]

### Roseville' Progressive Pottery (continued)

1914], Geo. W. Walker, M. Dwight Walker, and C. J. Golden. But by July of the following year, three of the stockholders had asked for a receiver, claiming that the management was squandering the property (July 14, 1905, *Brick and Clay Record*). By April 30<sup>th</sup> of 1906 (*Brick and Clay Record*) the company had been dissolved, with F. M. Rider appointed receiver.

The most prominent of the men associated with the Progressive Pottery appears to have been Dr. George W. W. Walker, "an eminent medical practitioner," who established his practice in Roseville in 1878. (His father, G. W. Walker [1808-1892] may have been the G. W. Walker who operated the Central Pottery and was listed in 1888 as employing four men producing fruit jars. This pottery, which stood on the site of the later National and Ungemach potteries, was leased to J.B. Owens in 1889 and later run by John Baughman). Not much is known about the other men associated with the Progressive Pottery, although Alvah Rider is listed as having a pottery in 1892, and both James Armstrong and Charles J. Golden are listed in the 1900 census as potters. Interestingly, the 1900 census also shows 71 year old George Walker as boarding with the Goldenes, although this would make him born in 1828, making it look like there may have been two G.W.s as well as a G.W.W. Walker.

Given its short life and various difficulties, it is a wonder that the Progressive Pottery Co. got any ware made, and examples are not common. Only three examples are available, although two or three others have been seen, usually with an impressed triangle in the center of the bottom and the words "PURE FLINT/PROGRESSIVE POTTERY" in a circle. Recently a bean pot has been found with a somewhat different mark—the same words but arranged more-or-less horizontally and with no triangle.

Also intriguing are several sherds found at the pottery site and bearing the Progressive's characteristic design of incised lines and the letters "...URY...E" representing "Twentieth Century German," as well as another sherd bearing the letters "GER" in a different script, and—more problematic—several with the dimple and heart mark generally ascribed to the Lowry pottery. A little archaeological testing might clarify this problem.



Above, the mark of Progress Pottery reads "Pure Flint Progressive Pottery." Notice that there is a triangle in the center of the bowl. A stone-ware beanpot has been found without the triangle in the center, making it extremely rare and unique. [Photos courtesy of James L. Murphy.]